

Mr. Ford's Page

PEOPLE have thought right along that the statement, "we are entering a New Era," was simply speech-making. It sounded big but meant less than face value. It rounded off a paragraph nicely and seemed to enroll the speaker among the prophets. But every day is driving the truth home to the slowest minds: the feet of the Race are already across the threshold of the New Era. The institutions and practices and ideas which ruled and ruined the old era are coming down; they are falling to pieces all around us—and the result is that many people are nervous and afraid. What they thought was merely a speech-maker's phrase has turned out to be an earthquake.

It is not the first time this has happened. Less than half a dozen times in the long history of mankind a similar overturning has occurred. So we are not entirely in the dark as to how these matters go. And one of the marks that has followed every such occurrence is that the people have been preserved through it.

Nature or Destiny or God—call it as you prefer—has never yet destroyed the most valuable of all earth's wealth, namely, humanity. There is every reason to believe that the changes which occur in spite of humanity's desires, occur nevertheless for humanity's benefit—and that, not in a mystical sense, which you must believe to see, but in a sense which is evident to all.

So, for the fearful among us, that is worth remembering: these upheavals occur for the benefit of common people, and they are saved through it.

What disappears are some of the ideas that have preyed long upon the people. These ideas have been wonderfully successful of recent years, until in the minds of many people it seemed that all the evil principles had attained so strong a hold as to be impossible of dislodgement. But their success was their doom. They have collapsed upon themselves. They are done and passing.

Much of the complaint we hear comes from those whose livelihood has been drawn from their impure sources. Some of the movements afoot today are nothing more nor less than organizations of money-suckers, big and little, to keep their "soft things" from being shoved out by fate. Groups of big administrators insist on keeping the old mistaken methods, because these methods are essential to the jobs they hold.

It is these who cry that "the world is going to pieces." In so far as they can see, they are right; their world is going to pieces. And it is their punishment. All these years they have been saying to themselves, "Eat, drink, and be merry." They have lived as if the fallacy that supported them could last forever. They have paid no heed to the complaints of the poor, nor sympathized with their needless burdens. They have not used their exalted places and their authority to set the affairs of men on a stronger and juster basis. They have not considered themselves servants of humanity. They have been strangers to the high responsibility placed upon them. Therefore, the edifice they have built, being wrongly built, being a house of selfishness mostly, is falling of its own frailty and fault.

What a reassurance it is to know that we live in a world where all edifices reared on falsity, tumble down!

But these things which filled their earth with their own sense of importance and the noise of their activities, were after all, not the real world. The real world is that of commonplace men and women, who are the depositories of the destiny of the race. They alone matter. For them all else exists, and whatever does not exist for them cannot long survive.

Now, when you turn to that real world, you find it all there. It is not a new humanity that is about to appear, but the old humanity freed of some of its burden of false ideas.

That is to say, all the raw material of real life is left to us in abundance. That is a fact, any way you care to look at it. The world has abundance. The New Era opens with a plenitude of everything in the earth. There is enough food on earth today to subsist the world for five or more years. There is enough metal above ground to serve all our need for a long time to come. In the things of Use and the utensils of Living, the world is abundantly supplied. At no time have the people ever pioneered into a new condition of things with such wealth of supply.

And the world has abundance of experience, too. At no other time of our history have there been more individuals trained to hold up their end, without the necessity of explicit and constant direction from others. More men have been trained to bear responsibility. More men have learned to use their individual powers as freemen. As a people, as a race, we have been "heat treated" by experience. We have been allowed to achieve hardihood without hardness, and have received discipline without debasement.

Our raw material and finished stock of courage, too, is very great. Courage is the mark of the mint of life. Courage gives value and currency to all the other qualities. What if a man is clear seeing, and knows where right is right and wrong is wrong, if he have not the courage to throw the light of his discernment on the thing itself? What if a man *knows*, if he have not courage to *do*? Fear, timidity, hesitancy, in the face of any duty to expose the wrong, are fatal to an otherwise splendid individuality. Without courage a man is like a watch without a mainspring. But that quality exists in abundance today. There never was a time when so many men faced the world unafraid in their own affairs, and unafraid for the future of mankind's affairs.

Now, out of all this material supply, and this fund of spiritual quality, it is perfectly possible to construct the new world. The raw material of mind and matter are ready at hand, plenty of it.

And this is the fact for all people to bear in mind. Nothing has gone to pieces except that which deserved to go to pieces, and nothing will break down except that which ought to break down.

Sometimes people come around and say, "I don't know whether you realize it or not, but this world is in an awful fix." It is worth while to look at the background of such people. What world do they mean?

Some of these people come from the money world, the so-called financial world, the world which has been accustomed to think of itself as the superior branch of the business world, and which has failed so miserably in so many things of late. When they say that the world is going to pieces, they mean their world. And, true, it is. Money is a perfectly dead thing. Dollars never increase, they never "lay" interest as a hen lays eggs. Money doesn't grow. And the philosophy of business built on the opposite statement is necessarily going to pieces. The present unjust and unscientific financial system has run itself into the ditch.

But that is not tragic. It is a mighty good thing for the world that false systems break down. And it is a mighty hopeful fact that when false systems do break down, the real and substantial things of life remain unaffected by the fall.

Sometimes these prophets of woe come from the camp of partisan politics—and that "world" is going to pieces, too. Good! But "we, the people of the United States," are still here, and the American idea of liberty and right still lives. The old feeders at the partisan trough are much disturbed, but no one else is.

When a man tells you that the world is going to pieces, inquire which world he means. The world that was meant to be, is still here and growing.

TWO men recently said, "This world is in an awful fix." Their worlds are. One of them came out of the world of partisan politics—and that world is certainly in a bad condition. The other came out of the financial world, so-called, and that world, too, is feeling the earthquake. Why? Because they are both founded on fallacy, and they are bound to collapse. But the real world of folks, of human values, of destiny and prosperity and progress—the real world is all right. It was never in better shape. More material wealth, more mental wealth than ever before. This real world getting better with every collapse of a false idea or institution.